

Mesa Academic Senate Resolution Reaffirming Faculty Purview Over Student Evaluations and Assigning Grade

Whereas, California Education Code Education Code §76224 (a) states (emphasis added), “When grades are given for any course of instruction taught in a community college district, the grade given to each student shall be the grade determined by the instructor of the course and the determination of the student’s grade by the instructor, in the absence of mistake, fraud, bad faith, or incompetency, shall be final;” and,

Whereas, SDCCD Administrative Procedure 4231 — Grade Changes, section 2 states (emphasis added): The instructor of the course shall determine the grade to be awarded to each student. In the absence of mistake, fraud, bad faith, or incompetence, the grade determined by the instructor is final; and,

Whereas, SDCCD Board Policy 4030 — Academic Freedom, section 1.b identifies the following as "fundamental rights" of faculty (emphasis added):

- 2) Individual faculty member determination of instructional materials, course content, and presentation, and student evaluation methods, in concert with colleagues, so as to assure consistency of instruction and academic standards;
- 4) Individual faculty member authority to evaluate enrolled students on the basis of the academic merit of the students’ performance; and,

Whereas, there was a recent Grade Challenge Appeal Review Panel related to charges that a student used AI to complete assignments, and “the panel determined that the record did not establish malice, retaliation, bad faith, or instructor incompetence,” and the Panel nevertheless determined to change the final grade assigned by the instructor, and President Ashanti Hands affirmed the decision of the Panel; and,

Whereas, when questioned about this President Hands justified her decision by claiming that “The evidence could neither prove nor disprove suspected AI use. Three previously graded essays were retroactively reduced to zero. Sanction documentation for the above was submitted outside the timeline required by AP 5500.1. Together, these findings led me to determine that the retroactive grade reductions were a mistake. This was a procedural determination, not a finding of intentional wrongdoing.” This despite the professor following clear syllabus language that outlined these processes and the fact that the instructor submitted the Academic Sanction documents as soon as they decided to change the student’s grade,

Therefore, be it resolved that the San Diego Mesa College Academic Senate reaffirms the rights of faculty to evaluate students in their classes and assign final grades, and that absent mistake, fraud, bad, faith, or incompetence this grade shall be final; and,

Therefore, be it further resolved that the San Diego Mesa College Academic Senate demands that administration respect faculty expertise in the determination of whether or not generative AI has been used to complete assignments; and,

Therefore, be it finally resolved that the San Diego Mesa College Academic Senate demands that the Administration respect faculty rights and purview over student evaluation and the assignment of final grades and reverse their decision in this case.